



Consumer Highlights

SANTA ROSA FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES NEWSLETTER

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Food Safety Checklist For "Planned-Over" Foods

Making extra food to serve another day is a great time-saver IF food is handled SAFELY -- and in a way to assure the BEST TASTE. Follow these tips to transform languishing leftovers into promising planned-overs.

COOLING

Separate and refrigerate the portion to be served for your next meal BEFORE you put the food on the table. This keeps food quality higher by preventing "planned-overs" from becoming "picked-overs." It also helps keep food safe.

Refrigerate planned-overs in shallow containers so they cool faster in the refrigerator. It's not necessary for a food to be completely cool before it's refrigerated. To help food cool slightly before refrigeration, place a shallow container of food on a cooling rack to allow air to circulate all around the pan for about 20 to 30 minutes.

For thicker foods, such as stews, hot puddings and layers of meat slices, limit depth of food to 2 inches. LOOSELY cover food upon refrigeration. This allows heat to escape and protects from accidental contamination from other foods during cooling. Stir food occasionally to help it cool; use a clean utensil each time. Cover tightly when cooled.

Avoid letting perishable cooked foods, such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy products, cooked rice and pasta sit at room temperature longer than TWO hours TOTAL -- the TOTAL is the total of the first and second use.

A refrigerator temperature of 40⁰ F or lower will slow bacterial growth. Keep your freezer at 0⁰ F or lower. Freezing will stop most bacterial growth so frozen foods keep longer than those at refrigerator temperature. Freezing DOES NOT kill bacteria -- it is still important to handle food safely.

Keep an appliance thermometer in your refrigerator and in your freezer to assure they stay at these recommended temperatures. Buy a thermometer at a discount, hardware, grocery store or other store that sells kitchen cooking tools. Periodically, place an instant-read thermometer in your refrigerator and in your freezer to check the accuracy of your appliance thermometer. Replace an inaccurate appliance thermometer if it cannot be calibrated.

As a general rule, use the refrigerated planned-overs within one to two days for best safety and quality. Freeze for longer storage. Cool foods in the refrigerator before putting them in your freezer.

GENERAL FREEZING TIPS

Freeze foods in portion sizes you'll need for future meals. For example, if there are two in your family and you each eat a cup of rice for a meal, freeze in two-cup portions.

Some common foods generally cited as NOT freezing well include:

- * cooked eggs;
- * cooked "chunks" of potatoes (mashed and twice-baked may freeze satisfactorily);
- * custards and cream puddings, by themselves or in pies;
- * potato salad;
- * pasta;

- * raw, watery vegetables such as lettuce, cucumbers and radishes; tomatoes, celery and cabbage might be satisfactorily frozen as an ingredient in an already cooked dish such as a soup or casserole;
- * yogurt and sour cream;
- * mayonnaise may separate during freezing and thawing;
- * sauces and gravies thickened with flour or cornstarch may separate and break down when frozen;
- * fried foods may lose their crispness; and
- * crumb toppings, such as on casseroles, may become soggy after freezing.

Sometimes you will see these foods in commercially frozen versions of some of these items because food companies have equipment that freezes food faster and helps retain quality better. Also, various ingredients, generally unavailable to home cooks, are used commercially to help prevent frozen foods from breaking down.

Food Reflections Newsletter -
April 2002

Medicare Now Pays for Certain Forms of Nutrition Therapy

Dietitians and doctors have known for years that nutrition counseling for conditions like heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes can help treat disease and save lives. But it can be expensive-up to \$100 or more for a session with a dietitian in some locations. Fortunately, lawmakers seem to be getting the picture that such counseling is a good investment-and it's showing up in Medicare.

Effective January 1st this year, Medicare has added a benefit that could help millions of people: coverage for medical nutrition therapy for diabetes and kidney disease. Medical nutrition therapy is personalized nutrition counseling by a registered dietitian or other qualified nutrition professional who will work with you to assess your eating habits, suggest ways to change your diet, develop specific goals, and track your efforts with lab tests to measure how well the changes are working. A person with diabetes might work on losing weight and learning how to make food choices that not only help to lower blood sugar but also keep cholesterol in check, since diabetes is a major risk factor for heart disease. And someone with failing kidneys who needs to carefully coordinate the amounts of protein, sodium, and phosphorus she or he is eating can also benefit from a dietitian's expert guidance.

Part of what convinced Congress to fund medical nutrition therapy for the two conditions was a report by the prestigious Institute of Medicine, which said that nutrition counseling is a wise investment. It could save tens of millions of dollars a year for diabetes alone, not to mention stave off a whole host of medical complications with fewer drugs.

Family and Consumer Sciences
Hotline – April 2002

Spring Cleaning

Tips for Household Textiles

Draperies, bedspreads, comforters, upholstery and slipcovers are all part of the spring cleaning agenda. These items can collect dust and dirt, as well as suffer fading and discoloration that can

damage their fibers and diminish their looks, observes The Soap and Detergent Association.

Comforters and quilts collect varying degrees of grime. In kids' rooms, where they are sprawled over and flopped on, the need for cleaning is obvious. But, even in seldom-used areas, such as guest rooms, dust and direct sunlight can take their toll. Some of these bed coverings can be laundered at home. Check the care labels. Others, particularly large comforters, may require the services of a professional dry cleaner, either because they're dry-clean-only or because they won't fit into a home washer and dryer for proper cleaning.

Most draperies can be dry cleaned. Check the care label as some draperies with reflective backings require laundering. The average life of draperies is three years for unlined ones, five years for lined ones. These time frames will vary with fabric types, dyes and sun exposure. Cleaning should be done at least once a year to prevent soil build-up and discoloration. In between cleanings, vacuum regularly to remove surface dust and grime.

Blankets, comforters and mattress pads should be cleaned at least four times a year. Pretreat heavily-soiled areas with a pre-wash product. Set the washing machine on high water level, delicate agitation and normal spin. Add detergent and partially fill the washer with warm water. Stop the washer. Then put in the comforter or blanket, pushing it down to submerge. Turn the washer back on, finish filling it with water and complete the wash cycle. To prevent clumping during the tumble dry process, add a few dry, clean towels.

Fabric refreshers are an option for hard-to-wash fabrics, such as carpets (after vacuuming), upholstery and curtains. Read and follow the product label directions. Spray evenly on the fabric until it's slightly damp. As the fabric dries, odors will fade away.

Wrinkle-releasing sprays are particularly useful for window treatments that may be difficult to iron. After reading the product label directions, spray in a sweeping motion until the item is slightly damp. Tug and smooth away the wrinkles.



Common Sources Of Uncommon Stains

When food or coffee spills on clothes, it's no surprise if a stain appears. Other stains seem to have mystery origins, but the culprit may be surprisingly close at hand, observes The Soap and Detergent Association.

Skin preparations, including fade creams, skin creams and acne preparations, generally contain bleaches that may discolor fabrics, so be sure they're completely absorbed into the skin before getting dressed. Hair spray and other hair preparations can also damage color and fibers. Put a towel or cloth around your shoulders to protect the garment before the product is used.

Light-colored or clear beverages may not cause an immediate stain. However, if they contain sugar, over time the stain may turn brown from heat exposure. The solution is to treat the spill by blotting it with cold water. Then clean the garment as soon as possible.

Salts from perspiration can eat away at fabrics, causing holes. Avoid deodorants and/or antiperspirants that contain aluminum chlorides. These can cause fabrics — particularly rayon — to deteriorate or turn yellow. To minimize the damage, clean the garment as soon as possible after wearing.

Facets – April 2002

Dining Out! Enjoy Reasonable Portion Sizes

Spring is a season of celebrations: Easter, Passover, Mother's Day and school graduations, to name a few. Americans invariably linking special occasions with food and holidays often involve going out to eat.

Restaurant portions, however, tend to be excessive. The good news is that there are ways to take charge of what and how much we eat in restaurants.

- Order a salad and an appetizer instead of an entrée.
- Request a half portion of an entrée.
- Split a large salad and one entrée between two people.
- Order a bowl of soup, and ask the waiter to halve the serving in the kitchen so you can share it. A half bowl of minestrone soup, loaded with

vegetables and beans, can be very satisfying.

- If ordering a full entrée, ask the waiter to bring a "doggie bag" at the beginning of the meal, so that half (or more) can be saved for lunch or dinner the next day. If you wait to get a "doggie bag" at the end of the meal, you may be tempted to keep nibbling, and end up eating more than you had intended.
- If ordering à la carte, order one baked potato and share - baked potatoes in restaurants are often quite large.
- Order one dessert to share among three or four people so you can each have a few bites of something sweet with a cup of coffee or tea. You'll satisfy your sweet tooth and won't feel deprived.

Focusing on enjoying the company and the occasion, not just the food, will make excessive eating less likely to occur.

Family and Consumer
Sciences Newsletter –
March 2002

Gardener's Corner

Spring is finally here! We were off to a stumbling start with freezes, late cold snaps and lingering cool nights through March and early April.

Early planted vegetables and flowers were either stalled or succumbed to cold soil and air temperatures. Those that made it through these adverse conditions are beginning to respond to rising temperatures.

There is still time for spring gardening. Garden centers are well stocked with plants, seeds and supplies.

May Tips

- Repair spring dead spots in the lawn by raking out debris and seeding, sprigging, plugging or sodding.
- Prepare beds and set out bedding plants of flowers and vegetables.
- Prune azaleas and other spring flowering shrubs, if needed.
- Control black spot on roses by beginning fungicide applications.
- Check the irrigation system for uniformity of application.
- Watch for and control aphids on the new growth of ornamentals and vegetables.
- Lightly re-fertilize annual flower and vegetable beds about a month after planting.

May Wildlife Happenings

- Least terns and snowy plovers nesting on Panhandle beaches.
- Brown pelican and white ibis young are now visible in nests.
- The last of the cedar waxwings and goldfinches head for their northern breeding grounds.
- Soft-shell and alligator snapping turtles complete egg laying.
- Loggerhead sea turtles begin nesting on summer nights.
- Alligators begin to court and make loud resounding "bellows."
- Bluegills are bedding. Take a break and go fishing!

Master Gardeners Graduate

Twenty new Master Gardeners graduate on April 26. They will join the ranks of this active group of 80 volunteers. Some have already begun work on one or more of the 40 active projects in Santa Rosa County.

We appreciate their regular attendance and participation in over 50 hours of intensive training.

Suggested Plants to Try This Spring

- Zinnias: They are easy to grow from seed.
- Pentas: The red flowered selections seem to be more hardy and are good butterfly attractors.
- Small fruited tomatoes: They can be more heat tolerant than some of the large fruited types. Varieties include Sweet 100, Sweet Million and Sweet Chelsea.
- Ornamental peppers: Easy to grow, long bearing and colorful too.
- Polka Dot Plant: A very colorful tropical, it loves heat and humidity.
- Milkweed: There are several species and varieties, but try *Asclepias tuberosa*. It's easy to grow, colorful and also a larval food for the monarch butterfly.

Dan Mullins
Horticulture Agent



RECIPES

Mexican Minestrone

This delightful one-pot meal is full of flavors and color. Better still, it is made in the microwave or on the stove in just 15 minutes

- 1-15¼ oz. can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 c. prepared chunky salsa
- 1 c. corn kernels, fresh or frozen
- 1- 15¼ oz can chicken broth*
- ¾ c. macaroni
- 1 c. red and green bell pepper, diced
- 1 c. cabbage

Combine all ingredients in a large pan or microwave container. If making on the stove, bring to a boil then reduce to a simmer and cook until macaroni is tender - about 15 minutes. Stir occasionally. If making in microwave, cook on full power until macaroni is tender - about 12-15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Optional: garnish with nonfat plain yogurt and chopped cilantro or dried oregano.

* Chicken broth for this recipe should be the low in fat and sodium. 1 serving of this recipe = 1½ cups- 7 grams of fiber.



Pepper and Squash Gratin

- 12 oz. russet potato, unpeeled
- 8 oz. yellow squash, thinly sliced
- 8 oz. zucchini, thinly sliced
- 2 c. frozen pepper stir-fry, thawed
- 1 tsp. dried oregano leaves
- ½ tsp. salt
- Black pepper to taste
- ½ c. grated Parmesan cheese or shredded reduced-fat sharp Cheddar cheese
- 1 Tbsp. butter or margarine, cut into 8 pieces

Preheat oven to 375°F. Coat 12X8-inch glass baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Pierce potato several times with fork. Microwave at HIGH (100%) 3 minutes; cut into thin slices.

Layer half of potatoes, yellow squash, zucchini, pepper stir-fry, oregano, salt, black pepper and cheese in prepared baking dish. Repeat layers and top with butter. Cover tightly with foil; bake 25 minutes or until vegetables are just tender. Remove foil and bake 10 minutes longer or until lightly browned.

Makes 8 servings

Nutrients per Serving: Calories: 106, Calories from Fat: 26%, Total Fat: 3 g, Saturated Fat: 2 g, Protein: 4 g, Carbohydrate: 15 g; Cholesterol: 8 mg, Sodium: 267 mg, Fiber: 2 g, Iron: <: 1 mg, Calcium: 79 mg, Vitamin A: 34 RE, Vitamin C: 10 mg, Sugar: 3 g;

Dietary Exchanges: 1 Starch, ½ Fat

The use of trade name in this publication is solely for the purpose of providing specific information. It is not a guarantee, warranty, or endorsement of the product names and does not signify that they are approved to the exclusion of others.

Sincerely,

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Extension Agent IV
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